Knowlton Township Land Use Board
Minutes
Tuesday, September 22, 2026

The regular meeting of the Knowlton Township Land Use Board was held on Tuesday, September 22, 2026. Chairman Taylor led the Board in the flag salute at 7:00 p.m. He announced that adequate notice of the meeting has been provided in compliance with the "Open Public Meetings Act" (as amended by Public Law 2025, chapter 72) notice of this meeting and the agenda were posted on Knowlton Township's official website and on the bulletin board at the Municipal Building. A moment of silence was held for our Military Personnel serving in harm's way.

Roll call:
Present: Allen, Baley, Gaeta, Mathez, Mazza, O'Neill, Overpeck, Smith, Drake, Mezzanotte and Taylor.

Absent:

Also Present: Attorney Blount, Engineer Nusser

Appointment of Board Professional:
The resolution for appointment of land use attorney along with the professional contract were distributed prior to the meeting. Chairman Taylor asked if everyone had a chance to review the resolution appointing Attorney Mark Blount for the remainder of the calendar year. A motion to approve was made by Mr. Mathez and seconded by Mr. Smith. Roll call vote: Allen – abstain, Baley – yes, Gaeta – yes, Mathez – yes, Mazza – yes, O'Neill – yes, Overpeck – yes, Smith – yes, Drake – yes, Mezzanotte – yes, Taylor – yes.

Approval of Minutes:
The Aug 25, 2026 regular meeting minutes were distributed prior to the meeting for review. A Motion to approve was made by Ms. Mezzanotte and seconded by Ms. O'Neill. Roll call vote approving the minutes: Allen – abstain, Baley – yes, Gaeta – yes, Mathez – yes, Mazza- yes, O'Neill – yes, Overpeck – yes, Smith – yes, Drake – yes, Mezzanotte – yes, Taylor – yes.

The Aug 25, 2026 executive session minutes were distributed prior to the meeting for review. A motion to approve was made by Ms. Mezzanotte and seconded by Mr. Baley. With no other discussion roll call vote: Allen – abstain, Baley – yes, Gaeta – yes, Mathez – yes, Mazza – yes, O'Neill – yes, Overpeck – yes, Smith – yes, Drake – yes, Mezzanotte – yes, Taylor – yes.

Adoption of Resolutions:
#26-004 Allentown SMSA Limited Partnership d/b/a Verizon Wireless and Cellco Partnership d/b/a Verizon Wireless, Block 64, Lot 1.02

Chairman Taylor asked if everyone had looked over this resolution. It was deeming the application incomplete. Motion on the resolution was made by Mr. Gaeta and seconded by Mr. Drake. Roll call vote: Allen – abstain, Baley – yes, Gaeta – yes, Mathez – yes, Mazza – yes, O'Neill – yes, Overpeck – yes, Smith – yes, Drake – yes, Mezzanotte – yes, Taylor – yes.

#23-004 Quiet Valley Printing/Deroche, Block 12, Lots 7, 8 and 9

Chairman Taylor asked if there was a motion on this resolution which was actually deeming it incomplete with conditions. Verification of who the actual property owners are is requested. Motion was made by Mr. Smith. Motion was seconded by Ms. O'Neill. Roll call vote: Allen – abstain, Baley – yes, Gaeta – yes, Mathez -yes, Mazza – yes, O'Neill – yes, Overpeck – yes, Smith – yes, Drake – yes, Mezzanotte – yes, Taylor – yes

#26-003 George Burdge, Block 65, Lot 2.15

Chairman Taylor asked if there was a motion on this resolution. Motion to approve was made by Ms. O'Neill and seconded by Mr. Gaeta. With no discussion or corrections, roll call vote: Allen – abstain, Baley – yes, Gaeta – yes, Mathez – yes, Mazza -yes, O'Neill – yes, Overpeck – yes, Smith – yes, Drake – yes, Mezzanotte – yes, Taylor – yes.

#ZB21-002 Belvidere NJ Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses, Block 68, Lot 10.01

Chairman Taylor noted this is for another extension of one year. He then asked if there was a motion on this resolution. Motion to approve was made by Ms. O'Neill and seconded by Mr. Gaeta. With no discussion on the resolution, roll call vote: Allen – abstain, Baley – yes, Gaeta – yes, Mathez – yes, Mazza – yes, O'Neill – yes, Overpeck – yes, Smith – yes, Drake - yes, Mezzanotte – yes, Taylor – yes.

Determination of Completeness:

#26-004 Allentown SMSA Limited Partnership d/b/a Verizon Wireless and Cellco Partnership d/b/a Verizon Wireless, Block 64, Lot 1.02

Chairman Taylor noted this applicant has asked to be carried until our October meeting. Discussion took place regarding whether we needed to vote and approve the extension. Engineer Nusser thought being it was deemed incomplete there was nothing to carry. It was decided being they are incomplete and have not submitted anything new to us, it does not require a vote.

#26-005 John Paxos, Block 48, Lot 23.01

Engineer Nusser explained this is an application for a pole barn to be used as a garage. They are seeking setback relief for the side yard setback where they have 11 feet and 30 is required. Mr. Nusser explained he spoke to the applicant, and he supplied an updated plan to clarify what was going on with the driveway and some other items. He did a rough calculation on the impervious coverage, and it would be over on that as well. So that will be relief needed as well as the side yard setback. There are a number of waivers that are required that we are recommending. Ultimately his recommendation is to deem it complete. Chairman Taylor asked him to go through the items that he recommends we waive. Items listed as waivers were 6b – existing streets. 6c existing structures within 200 feet – there is one home located northeast closer to the road and on the opposite side from the proposed garage. There is nothing within 200 feet of where the garage is. 6d – location of septic and wells within 200 feet. The well and septic are not within 200 feet. 6e – topography. The applicant requested a waiver on this. Engineer Nusser looked at the surrounding area and there are no regulated features that would impact it, including floodplains.

6F – Tax map sheet block & lot numbers in title block. It is not in the title block but is on the plan. 6h – graphic/numeric scale. There is no graphic scale, but there is numeric. 6L-identification of zone boundaries within 200 feet. This was not provided. The zone is FPD and all around it is also. 6M – applicants/owners name, address, phone, signature on the plan. The plan is within the application. Item #8 - whether property is in the carbonate rock area. Mr. Nusser reviewed and it is not within the carbonate rock area. Item #9 – regarding wetlands. Mr. Nusser did a review of the state's mapping and there are none on the site or within 200 feet.

Mr. Drake's question on the topography: isn't his reason for doing this because this requires retaining walls. Engineer Nusser confirmed there are retaining walls. Chairman Taylor reminded the board these are waivers for completeness. We could ask for more at the hearing during his testimony. If you want to see the topography before the hearing, you can certainly ask for that. Mr. Drake did not need it prior to the hearing. So that could be something we could waive for completeness, but we could inform the applicant that needs to be provided in time for the hearing. He will need to provide testimony for a number of things at the hearing. Mr. Smith noted the topography would help with the drainage question. Chairman Taylor asked again if we want to waive topography for completeness or deem it incomplete because it doesn't have topography. Engineer Nusser: if you want it provided by the time of the hearing, then you should deem it incomplete until you receive the information. Chairman Taylor: do you think testimony from the applicant would be sufficient? Engineer Nusser: thinks the applicant can more than likely satisfy the board with testimony. In hearing the board maybe the recommendation to the applicant is that supplying additional photographs of the area would be helpful. Also, the board members are able to go do a site visit. If the board does not feel that is sufficient, they can certainly ask for it. Mr. Drake agreed to go with the engineer's recommendation. Chairman Taylor noted this could also be at the applicant's peril if it gets to the hearing and we say we really needed it. He asked the board if there were any of the other items we would not want to waive for completeness. There were none. He then asked if there was a motion on completeness for this application. Mr. Smith made a motion for completeness based on the comments from the engineer's letter. Motion was seconded by Mr. Gaeta. Roll call vote: Allen – yes, Baley – yes, Gaeta – yes, Mathez – yes, Mazza – yes, O'Neill – yes, Overpeck – yes, Smith – yes, Drake – yes, Mezzanotte – yes, Taylor – yes.

Engineer Nusser brought up next month's schedule possibly being very busy if the other 2 applicants appear. Chairman Taylor noted being this application was deemed complete it would be first on the agenda for the hearing. Quiet Valley has a condition of completeness. If it is not done, we are not going to hear it. Engineer Nusser volunteered to touch base with Quiet Valley's attorney to make sure the ownership issue is cleared up.

New Business:

#23-004 Quiet Valley Printing/Deroche, Block 12, Lots 7, 8 and 9

Chairman Taylor noted if this application had been deemed complete, they would be on for new business. But they had asked to be carried to the October 27 meeting.

Public Comment:

The public comment section was opened. With no public comments, public portion was closed.

Board Discussion:

Ms. Mezzanotte spoke regarding a membership situation that needs to be resolved involving the environmental commission. Two members, Mr. Gaeta and herself, are on the environmental commission. Mr. Gaeta is on the land use board as a class II member because he is an employee of the township. So, he cannot be the liaison between the EC and the LUB. Her understanding is that must be a class IV member. And if that is the case, she cannot be a LUB alternate member. Attorney Blount said she cannot, she must be a full member. Ms. Mezzanotte knew the EC must have someone on the land use board, but the fact that the person must be a member, she just found out. Attorney Blount said he would look to see if there is an alternate way around that. Chairman Taylor noted the only other way would be for the committee to make someone else an alternate and Ms. Mezzanotte a regular member. This will need to go to the township committee for review. The board secretary will send a memo to the committee for the next meeting. Discussion took place regarding the other alternate, Mr. Drake, being on the Historic Commission. It is not a requirement that a member of the HC be on the LUB, but it is a requirement of the EC. Attorney Blount will look into this matter.

Executive Session:

WHEREAS, Section 8 of the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, P.L. 1975 permits the exclusion of the public from a meeting in certain circumstances; and
WHEREAS, this public body is of the opinion that such circumstances presently exist;
NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Land Use Board of the Township of Knowlton, Warren County, State of New Jersey, as follows:

1. The public shall be excluded from discussion of and action upon the hereinafter specified subject matter.
2. The general nature of the subject matter to be discussed is as follows: Litigation.
3. It is anticipated that the minutes of this executive session will be disclosed to the public when the need for confidentiality no longer exists. Action may be taken after the executive session
4. This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

Date adopted: September 22, 2026

Chairman Taylor announced the board was going into executive session and with no public in attendance a motion to move into executive session to discuss matters of litigation at 7:30 p.m. was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Mr. Baley. In a voice vote all were in favor with no opposition or abstentions. The board came out of Executive Session with a motion made by Mr. Gaeta and seconded by Ms. Mezzanotte and returned to open (public) session at 8:36 p.m.

Approval of Bills:

Chairman Taylor asked if everyone had a chance to look over the bills. Mr. Baley made a motion to approve payment of the bills. Motion was seconded by Mr. Smith. With no discussion on the bills, in a roll call vote: Allen – yes, Baley – yes, Gaeta – yes, Mathez – yes, Mazza – yes, O'Neill – yes, Overpeck – yes, Smith – yes, Drake – yes, Mezzanotte – yes, Taylor – yes.

Adjournment:

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Baley and seconded by Mr. Smith. In a voice vote all were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:44 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Doreen Apgar,
Board Secretary